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ABSTRACT

This report describes the use of hypnosis at the Hiram College Counseling Center, a counseling technique that has been especially helpful in academic, athletic, and personal improvement areas. The induction techniques of hypnosis are described as well as the use of hyperempiria. The use of hypnosis in improving study habits and alleviating test anxiety is outlined along with several case studies that illustrate the effectiveness of the technique. The paper also describes outreach activities of the counseling center including Graduate Record Examination Workshops incorporating the hypnosis technique. Examples are also given that describe the value of hypnosis for athletes in training. (JAC)

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# THE USE OF CLINICAL HYPNOSIS IN A COLLEGE COUNSELING CENTER

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College counseling centers began around 1876, when President Gilman of John Hopkins University appointed the first counselor of students. Gradually through the years institutions of higher learning did establish special centers to provide for the developmental needs of the students and a specially trained staff to administer these centers.

In the late 1930's, most colleges had acquired a dean who assumed guidance responsibilities. This guidance was mainly in the area of the student's curricular choices. Closely related to the development of curricular guidance was the development of vocational advisory services. Following World War II, the Veteran's Administration established guidance bureaus on college campuses. It was these guidance bureaus which set the stage for the college counseling center of today.

Hiram College is a four-year coeducational liberal arts institution located approximately thirty-five miles southeast of Cleveland. The College was founded by members of the Disciples of Christ Church in 1850 and today has an enrollment of a little over 1,000 students.

The Hiram College Counseling Center assists students in deriving maximum benefit from their college experience and in developing the full range of their potential. The Center is approximately eleven years old and is presently staffed by a director, one full time counselor, and two part-time counselors.

The use of Clinical Hypnosis began four years ago in the Center. During this time its use has met with much approval from students and administration. It must be stated that Clinical Hypnosis is only one technique or tool out of many that is employed at the Center. However, with the increase of public awareness in Clinical Hypnosis its use has grown.

The major uses of Clinical Hypnosis are in the areas of: (1) Academic, (2) Personal Improvement and (3) Athletics. All hypnosis is done with the approval of the student and, when required, the college physician. Both hetero-hypnosis and self-hypnosis are employed.

The induction of hypnosis takes many forms. Usually the student merely sits comfortably with his eyes closed and a simple progressive relaxation technique is applied. Or the student is simply talked to while looking at a spot on the wall or ceiling and gradually merges into a state of hypnosis. After the first successful induction, when the student has entered a light hypnotic state, the next object is to gradually deepen the trance as much as possible. There are many ways of achieving this, the most common are: (1) By direct suggestion, (2) By relation of depth to performance, (3) By counting and breathing techniques, (4) By induction of graded responses, (5) By "visualization" techniques. Once in a deep state "post-hypnotic suggestions" are given to the student that will remain with him after he emerges from the hypnotic state.

Another technique that has worked well with college students is hyperempiria, developed by Gibbons. It differs from hypnosis in that the suggestions are for increased alertness and sensitivity, combined with various types of mind expanding imagery. Traditional procedures are usually based on suggestions of drowsiness and sleep. An example of heightening rapport in hyperempiria:

> You are continuing to go higher and higher into hyperempiria with every word I utter. And you feel yourself carried on to even greater heights, the higher you go, the stronger and the more pronounced the effects of my words become.

Since Hiram College is an outstanding educational institution, the main focus of hypnotic work is in the academic realm. When students experiencing academic difficulty come into the Center, an appointment is made with a counselor. During this appointment a counseling interview takes place and the problems are explored. Many times appropriate advice can be arrived at in the waking state.

The majority of cases in which hypnosis is utilized are ones in which the student requests this procedure from the beginning. Usually they are referred by fellow students who have used hypnosis successfully.

According to Arons (1965) learning can be broken down into the following facets or phases:

1. Impression or registration. If the student is concentrating correctly on his studies, the material makes a deep impression and is therefore well registered.

2. Retention. Once the student has learned the subject matter, then this material is retained in the mind.

3. Recall. Students must eventually recall the material which is learned.

Based on the above model, determining the student's area of difficulty is essential. Once isolated, positive suggestions are formulated to correct the problem. What follows are examples of techniques and suggestions used in the Center.

If the problem is impression, a suggestion similar to Arons would be:

> Whenever you study, you are fully absorbed and completely engrossed in the material.

Also Hartland's (1966) routine of ego-strengthening:

> You have now become so deeply relaxed...so deeply asleep...that your mind has become so sensitive. You will feel more alert...more wide awake...more energetic.

Followed by very direct suggestions which are strengthened at each session:

> You will become...so deeply interested and absorbed in what you are studying that you will be able to give your whole attention to what you are doing... to the complete exclusion of everything else.

Cooke and Van Vogt's (1965) work on concentration is unique and helpful. Their time approach has worked well:

> Look at the clock or your watch and decide how long you wish to concentrate. Then say to yourself aloud three times the "time" at which you wish to break this concentration.

When it comes to the retention problem, suggestions include:

> Your retention span is steadily increasing (Arons).

or

> You retain a perfect conscious memory...your mind has an association pattern for everything that has happened to you (Cooke and Van Vogt).

or

> With every treatment that you have...your memory will improve enormously...and your work will become easier and easier (Hartland).

Cooke and Van Vogt make the analogy of the mind being like a library. Some books which represent our recent experience and well remembered past facts are on the public shelves; the majority are in the storage files. All these books are available to us. Some we can pick off the shelves at our convenience

and others we have to wait a little while for. They go on to say:

> Your conscious memory is tremendously increasing. You have a great many more books on the public shelves than ever were there before.

Another technique is using Shrader's (1976) blackboard. Here the student is requested to visualize a mythical blackboard, under hypnosis, and is required to write the information he wants to recall on the board. This procedure has been found to be excellent for memorizing mathematical and scientific formulas.

The third phase is recall. Here again suggestions from Arons are used:

> Whatever you have learned flows freely and easily through your mind when you need it.

or

> Whatever you have learned is always at your fingertips.

or

> Whatever you have learned is always at your beck and call.

Cooke and Van Vogt's library idea is continued with the suggestion that:

> From now on, when you wish information that you have previously known, look on the public shelves... if it isn't there send an order into the unconscious... tell yourself clearly and specifically as though you were ordering a book at the library.

Hartland's suggestion for recall is:

> You will not only be able to remember what you have learned... but you will be able to recall it without difficulty... whenever you need to do so.

Study skills is another academic concern where hypnosis is employed. Arons' "sandwich method" of learning is taught. In this method the student goes into hypnosis for three minutes, then studies for three minutes, then goes back into hypnosis for three minutes. After this routine, the student is al-

lowed a five minute rest period. Eventually, the student is encouraged to study for fifteen minutes and give up the rest period.

In addition, basic study habits as outlined by Bluestein (1972) in his book, The No-Sweat Study Guide are reviewed with the student under hypnosis. Such headings under study habits include: "Who needs them?", "getting the drive," "for weaklings only," and "sticking to it." This is followed by a section on how to study, where the student is introduced to guilt free learning, where to study, schedules for study, and effective studying -- scheduled or not.

One special problem seen is "test anxiety." A definition of test anxiety is, when a student prepares well for an exam but becomes so nervous and apprehensive that his mind seems to go blank and he is unable to recall things that he knows. It has been our experience that students are very quick to admit that they have test anxiety. When in actuality they have not prepared well for the exam and/or they have poor study skills.

If ascertained that the problem is "real" test anxiety then hypnosis is the preferred mode of treatment. Hartland's procedures are followed in these cases. First the ego strengthening routine is applied followed by suggestions for test anxiety. Part of the routine is as follows:

> The moment you enter the examination room and pick up your paper to read the questions... you will become completely calm and relaxed ... and all your nervousness and apprehensions will disappear completely.

Suggestions from Bluestein are combined at times with Hartland's suggestions for specific situations like multiple choice and essay exams. An example is:

> You will decide upon the essay that you can tackle best... this will help you to relax and

> will give you a chance to think some more about the other essays...then answer the first one as fully as you can...without worrying about the others until you have completed it.

Both these approaches have been found to be extremely successful in the many cases treated. Let us look at a dramatic case.

Case 1: Cheryl H. was a 21 year old science major, when she came to the Center in academic difficulty. She had graduated from a large urban high school 99th in a class of 499. She was presently on academic probation, which meant her grade point average was below a "C" or 2.0 (out of a possible 4.0). During the initial interview it was clear that Cheryl was suffering from test anxiety. Hypnosis was started immediately and continued throughout the term. In addition, self hypnosis was taught. Her grade point went from below a 2.0 to a 3.5 that term in very difficult science courses. The following term it improved to a 3.75. Cheryl's overall gradepoint went to a 2.286 and she was removed from academic probation.

The Center is actively involved in outreach activities in addition to its busy one to one counseling sessions. Successful Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Workshops incorporating hypnosis have been conducted. The students are put through a mock GRE session. Students are required to pre-register for the workshop, actually signing in the day of the workshop and proceed to take part as if it were the actual GRE session. Towards the beginning of the workshop a group progressive relaxation induction is done, followed by the students being asked to focus in on a "pleasant scene" of their choice or on the word CALM. This deepens the relaxation level and is followed by suggestions for increasing impression, retention and recall of material. Then the students are awakened and put through a mini-sample GRE for about 30 minutes. Then various styles of questions are discussed and

additional information provided.

Students are instructed that if they become anxious or fatigued during the actual GRE session, to just close their eyes for about 20 seconds and think about their pleasant scene. This usually relaxes the students so that they are able to successfully complete the exam.

Individual dormitories are visited during final examination periods during which time "finals relaxation" procedures are employed. This assumes a similar format as the GRE workshops.

Finally, in the academic area, the Center provides lectures on the history and uses of Clinical Hypnosis to psychology and education classes at the college. Members of the Center are also a part of the college's outside speaker's bureau and have spoken at various other schools and churches.

Personal improvement is the second area where the Center becomes involved with students. Problems like smoking, weight loss, tension reduction, sexual dysfunctions, and assertiveness are treated with hypnosis. In many cases referrals are made by the health center and individual faculty and staff people.

Various approaches are used in treatment with these types of problems. No method appears better than another when it comes to success rate. The only consistent finding is that improvement is greater with individual treatment than with group hypnosis when dealing with personal improvement problems.

Athletics is an important area to many college students and also one with which the Center is involved. The use of hypnosis has proved most valuable when the athletic activity is one requiring a narrow external or internal focus of attention. Nideffer (1976) has stated, "hypnosis allows them (athletes) to do things; it does not give them power or cause them to excel."

For the past two years the director of the Center, also served as the varsity cross country team coach. The team had finished towards the bottom of the

conference for the past twelve years. This year they finished fifth in the conference and posted their best mark in many seasons.

The use of hypnosis was incorporated into the regular training program. Prior to every team practice, the runners were required to meet in the wrestling room, where mats were available. These sessions started with some kind of progressive relaxation technique, followed by deepening with a breathing procedure such as:

> I am going to count slowly up to five... and as I do so... you will take five very deep breaths and with each deep breath that you take... each time you breathe out... you will become more and more relaxed... and your relaxation will become deeper and deeper (Hartland, 1966)

This is then followed by mental rehearsal, where the harriers would actually run the race in their minds, "as if" they were actually running it - not observing it. These kinds of suggestions were offered:

> The thing that you really must keep in mind is the importance of noticing each sign of discomfort or fatigue and using it as a stimulus to keep going (Jackson, undated).

In addition, to using hypnosis during training, it was found extremely helpful prior to a race. During those few minutes before a race, there is very little a coach can do for his runners. What was done, was to have the entire team lie down on the ground with their eyes closed and have them go into hypnosis. Then have them awaken, fresh and motivated to run their best race ever.

This small procedure helped the runners a great deal. In addition, it helped to "psyche out" the other teams. An example of this was evident when a phone call was received, a day after a race, from an irate coach. He said, "What the hell are you doing with those runners laying on the ground; it got

my runners all upset."

The use of hypnosis also had a secondary gain. It brought the team closer together. The runners had some common experience which they shared with each other. Although it is difficult to measure such subjective feelings, hypnosis definitely assisted in achieving more team spirit.

Case 2: Terri B., is a 20 year old female, member of the Hiram College Cross Country Team. Terri had been practicing for months prior to the start of the season. The first race was one week into the academic term. Terri ran the three miles in 32 minutes and 30 seconds. She finished last for our team. Over the next six weeks hypnosis was incorporated in her training schedule. In her final performance of the term, Terri ran 24 minutes and 41 seconds and finished in second place. She was able to shave 7 minutes and 49 seconds off her initial time.

As well as working well with harriers, we also have experienced success in working with basketball players. It should be noted, at this point, that working with athletes is contingent upon the permission of their coaches. In dealing with basketballers the number one problem appears to be their foul shooting.

In improving foul shooting an approach similar to the one used with the cross country team is employed. The suggestions change to:

> When you prepare to shoot, your mind is fully absorbed and completely engrossed in what you are doing. When you step up to the line to shoot the ball, you are perfectly certain that you will make the basket (Arons, undated).

Another interesting case involved a basketball player that had to run.

Case 3: Bobby L. was a 22 year old senior, who had to run a mile under five minutes to qualify for the basketball team. After numerous attempts had met with failure, hypnosis was applied. Similar techniques as those al-

ready outlined were applied. In his very next attempt he had no difficulty in running the mile in the alloted time.

These are but a few examples of the use of hypnosis in a college athletic setting. Undoubtedly its use will expand greatly in this area and the college counseling center is the most appropriate place on campus to administer it.

Colleges have always served as microcosms of the society at large. However, when it comes to Clinical Hypnosis the former may be in the forefront. According to recent surveys, the number of schools in the United States teaching hypnosis had doubled over the past five years. About half of the graduate programs in psychology and one-third of the medical and dental schools now offer courses or workshops. As a result, Clinical Hypnosis is becoming more widely accepted on college campuses, and its prevalence more appropriate in college counseling centers.

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